

# Soquel Demonstration State Forest

Fall 2016  
NEWSLETTER



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### *Greetings from the Soquel Demonstration State Forest!*

*This summer was a busy one in the forest, as we hosted an Open House, welcomed two new Forestry Aides, launched our very own guided NatureTour app, and much more...*

**2016 SDSF Open House** This summer, forest staff coordinated with the Stewards of Soquel Forest to host an Open House at the Badger Spring picnic area. The August 6th event brought together university researchers, neighbors, CAL FIRE staff, agency reps and recreational visitors to learn about what's been happening at SDSF. The foggy morning found researchers and mountain bike enthusiasts setting up their booths among the old-growth redwoods. The sun came out and over 200 people arrived throughout the day, by bike or van shuttle, to listen to presentations on the habitat enhancement



projects, fish population studies in Soquel Creek, and Sudden Oak Death. Visitors also watched timber fallers demonstrate proper safety techniques used during timber operations. The crowd enjoyed a taco lunch, courtesy of the Stewards, the non-profit group that raises money and to support many projects at the forest. The day also celebrated the 26-year anniversary of the State Forest and the launch of a new educational NatureTour app. The audio tour follows the main forest road and is perfect for hikers and mountain



bikers. The SDSF staff thanks all who attended the Open House, with special thanks to **The Stewards of Soquel Forest!**

*The Stewards accept online donations. Please consider including the Stewards in your charitable giving by visiting:*  
[www.soquelforest.com](http://www.soquelforest.com)



### **NatureTour App**

The hottest application of 2016 is live! Download it today on your Android and enjoy your guided 18-stop audio tour through the Soquel Demonstration State Forest. *Download it [here](#)* and help us test the beta version. Learn about forest management, history, and current research at SDSF!





## How do we find out how the forest is growing?

Timber inventories are completed on the State Forest about every 10 years to categorize the timber and to plan for sustainable production. SDSF staff began a new inventory this summer to update the past inventory completed in 2006. A systematic grid of plots are being measured for data such as tree species, diameter, height, crown condition and position, which are later used for input in a computer modelling program to show forest-wide attributes. New vegetation type maps for the forest are also generated based on the California Wildlife Habitat Relationships classification system using the inventory data. Past inventories of SDSF have measured the volume of the forest increasing as periodic timber harvesting occurs. With over 500 plots, there is much work to be done and the inventory is expected to be completed in another year.



Cores from redwood trees showing slower growth with smaller growth rings from unharvested area (top) and increased growth with wider growth rings from thinned area (bottom)



### Meridian Timber Harvesting Plan Update

The approval of a new Timber Harvesting Plan (THP) means exciting times ahead in the forest. The Meridian THP covers 220 acres in the State Forest, with a projected volume of 1.5 million board feet (MMBF) of redwood and 54 MBF of Douglas-fir to be harvested. Sales from State Forest timber harvests fund the operations of the State Forest Program. Spring of 2017, timber harvesting is slated to begin, requiring temporary recreation closures of certain roads and trails for safety and to facilitate operations. Not to worry! This will not be a permanent closure. Stay tuned for announcements about opportunities for timber tours of the Meridian THP.

### What is silviculture?

*Silviculture is the art and science of controlling the establishment, composition, and growth of forests. Through the use of silvicultural prescriptions, foresters meet a variety of goals. At SDSF, we follow an uneven-age management system through single-tree selection harvesting. By choosing trees with specific characteristics, we strive to create a structurally complex forest with trees of varied sizes. This type of management aims to create resilient ecosystems by providing landscape heterogeneity, incentivizing growth and supporting local economies, all while protecting the forest integrity and the environment.*

### New Forestry Aides

**Marco** recently graduated from Cal Poly SLO with a degree in Forestry and Natural Resources. Marco is thrilled to be able to work in the Santa Cruz Mountains, as this area is home to his favorite tree, the coast redwood.



**Elynn** graduated with a degree in Forestry and Natural Resources from UC Berkeley this past May, and is excited to exercise her knowledge gained in school and to learn in a hands-on environment. Elynn's favorite trees are the coast redwood and the mangrove.





## Stream Restoration Update

Beginning in 2012 a series of Large Woody Debris structures were installed along Soquel Creek. SDSF and geologists from the California Geologic Survey (CGS) also implemented an innovative road repair project at a section of the Soquel Creek stream bank along Hihn's Mill Road. Under CGS Geologist Steve Reynolds' supervision, nine redwood rootwads and logs were installed to serve the purpose of protecting the road and creating fish habitat. Ongoing monitoring helps assess the condition and effectiveness of the structures. After last winter's storms, we found big changes in the morphology of the creek with increased pool frequency and depth that provide improved fish habitat.





**2017 California Arbor Week is March 7-14**

### Trees Are Superheroes!

#### Poster Contest

- For 3rd, 4th & 5th grades
- 1 winner chosen from each grade level
- Schools with most participants will be put in a drawing to win \$500!
- Deadline: February 14

#### Video Contest

- For 6th, 7th & 8th grades
- 1 winner chosen from each grade level
- Enter through your school or **individually**
- Winners receive \$100
- Deadline: February 14 (submit online!)

Find complete guidelines & activities online  
**[www.arborweek.org](http://www.arborweek.org)**

## The long and winding road of road improvements

Road maintenance is an ongoing project, and we are happy to check some big improvements off our road upgrade list, which is important for making sure our roads are resilient during the wet season. A new culvert was installed to improve road drainage and reduce erosion risk, roadside brush and low-hanging branches were removed to ensure CAL FIRE and other rescue vehicles can drive safely, and invasive plant species were removed. Another type of ongoing improvement along roads includes the establishment of shaded fuelbreaks. CAL FIRE crews and engine companies are expected to continue this important fuel reduction work this winter.



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